



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

- ♦ *To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.*

SEPTEMBER 15, 2015



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MEMBERSHIP

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

TERESA BENNETT
SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR, CRISIS SERVICES
*FOR **UMA AHLUWALIA**, DIRECTOR*
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

DEBBIE FEINSTEIN
ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY
*FOR **JOHN MCCARTHY***
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

RUSSELL HAMILL
ASSISTANT CHIEF
*FOR **J. THOMAS MANGER**, CHIEF*
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

THE HONORABLE SIDNEY KATZ
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

BOBBE MINTZ
COMMISSIONER
*FOR **JODI FINKELSTEIN**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

THE HONORABLE JOHN MOFFETT
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
*FOR **THE HONORABLE EUGENE WOLFE***
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

DARREN M. POPKIN
SHERIFF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

THE HONORABLE KARLA SMITH
CHAIR, DVCC
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
*FOR **THE HONORABLE JOHN W. DEBELIUS, III***
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

REBECCA SMONDROWSKI
BOARD MEMBER
*FOR **PATRICIA O'NEILL***
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WILLIAM SOLLOD
VICE CHAIR, DVCC
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
DIVISION OF PAROLE AND PROBATION
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

ANGELA TALLEY
CHIEF, PRE-TRIAL SERVICES
*FOR **ROBERT GREEN**, DIRECTOR*
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

PUBLIC MEMBERS

JULIAN AVENILLA
STUDENT MEMBER

DOROTHY FAIT, ESQ.
COMMUNITY MEMBER

CHERYL KRAVITZ
COMMUNITY MEMBER

RESA LEVY
COMMUNITY MEMBER

ESHIGO OKASILI, ESQ.
COMMUNITY MEMBER

<VACANT, NOMINATION PENDING>
COMMUNITY MEMBER

STAFF

THOMAS MANION
PROGRAM MANAGER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



COUNCIL INFORMATION

TERM OF SERVICE

There are seventeen voting members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) who serve without compensation and are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Five are Ex-Officio members who serve at the request of the County Council: the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court; the Administrative Judge of the District Court; the Sheriff; the State's Attorney; and the Regional Administrator for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. There are six Ex-Officio members who are appointed by the County Executive: a member of the County Council selected by the Council President; the Directors of the Montgomery County Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation; Health and Human Services; and Police; the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women; and the President of the Board of Education for Montgomery County Public Schools. In addition, there are five members of the general public appointed by the County Executive for renewable three year terms, one of whom is an attorney representing domestic violence victims, and four who have a demonstrated interest in domestic violence issues, including at least one who is a survivor of domestic violence. In 2010, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was amended to add a student member. The student member is a high school junior or senior who is appointed to serve a one year term which can be renewed for one additional year.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The DVCC meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month, and has met fifty-six times since September 2006. Meetings are open to the public.

LEADERSHIP

In January 2015, the DVCC elected Judge Karla Smith, representing the Montgomery County Circuit Court, as Chair; and elected William Sollod, Regional Administrator for the Division of Parole and Probation representing the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, as Vice Chair.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the ninth year since its creation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) has advanced its mission of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and creating a safe community where families are free of abuse. In 2014-2015, the four committees, Victim Services, Education and Outreach, Legislative and Policy Planning and Offender Program and Policy, have each identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year and makes recommendations for the next year.

Special thanks go to the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation for its continued, unwavering support of Domestic Violence Coordinating Council initiatives and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Utilized community grants to bring on additional FJC partners, to include the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP) and Court Watch Montgomery;
- ◆ Partnered with the Montgomery County FJC Foundation and the Montgomery College Foundation to offer scholarship assistance to FJC clients interested in career training or otherwise furthering their education at Montgomery College;
- ◆ Completed a proposal for a Montgomery County supervised visitation and monitored exchange program;
- ◆ Collaborated with multiple Montgomery County agencies and community organizations for the 6th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Conference, which was held on March 8, 2015;
- ◆ Coordinated the 6th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Contest;
- ◆ Presented the Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum to 2,400 youth participants in Montgomery County Public Schools as well as various youth groups in the community;
- ◆ Participated in the Montgomery County Public Schools Back-to-School Fair on August 29, 2015 to launch the 2015 PSA Contest and to promote the 7th Annual Choose Respect Healthy Teen Dating Conference and Healthy Dating Curriculum;
- ◆ Expanded the Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) program to include Richard Montgomery High School, in addition to the two existing schools - Springbrook High School and Montgomery Blair High School;



ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- ◆ Continued the FJC Five-Language Information Card initiative, which is a discreet, multi-lingual outreach program that promotes the FJC and the services it provides to victims of domestic violence and their families;
- ◆ Partnered with the Montgomery County FJC Foundation and Chesapeake Counseling Associates to coordinate the “Identify, Support, and Encourage: Children Exposed to Domestic Violence” training for youth service providers on May 12, 2015;
- ◆ Partnered with the Montgomery County Commission for Women on “A Community Conversation About Domestic Violence” in Germantown, MD on July 21, 2015;
- ◆ Carefully monitored domestic violence-related legislation that was proposed during the 2015 legislative session in the Maryland General Assembly;
- ◆ Evaluated and institutionalized a cooperative pilot program that expanded the Montgomery County Pre-Trial Supervision Unit’s GPS monitoring program to include 24-hour coverage for domestic violence cases;
- ◆ Coordinated a planned forum to promote communication and synergy among various Montgomery County agencies and organizations that work with offenders as part of the coordinated community response to domestic violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014-2015

- ◆ Ongoing collaboration among FJC agency partners and the Montgomery County FJC Foundation to continue identifying gaps in domestic violence victim services, and then exploring appropriate, sustainable solutions to fill those gaps;
- ◆ Development of a new, financially feasible proposal to bring supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to Montgomery County;
- ◆ Continued collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through the Choose Respect Montgomery initiative;
- ◆ Engage young men in domestic violence prevention through continued expansion of the CBIM program;
- ◆ Promote the Family Justice Center and its services through continued expansion of the FJC Five-Language Information Card initiative;
- ◆ Participate in events to educate the community about domestic violence, its impacts, and the resources that are available for victims and their families;



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014-2015 (CONTINUED)

- ♦ Continued collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC;
- ♦ Continued evaluation of the new 24-hour GPS program, completing any necessary paperwork and making any necessary adjustments as the program continues in the long term;
- ♦ Continued development and execution of the Montgomery County domestic violence forum to promote increased communication between county agencies and organizations that work with offenders as part of the coordinated community response to domestic violence;
- ♦ Explore the possibility of holding Montgomery County domestic violence forums at regular intervals.



VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DARREN POPKIN, SHERIFF

(PREVIOUSLY: DARYL LEACH, MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF)

The Victim Services Committee has been collaborating actively with Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) agency partners, the Montgomery County FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the FJC. The Committee is focused on establishing and funding FJC programs that not only promote safety for victims of domestic violence, but also assist these victims in locating a path to sustainability. Of specific interest this year was expanding the list of FJC partners both on and off-site, as well as continuing to explore the possibility of establishing a supervised visitation/monitored exchange program in Montgomery County. Primary objectives successfully achieved in the previous year are outlined below, as well as recommendations for the coming year.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Since opening its doors in April 2009, more than six thousand victims representing over one hundred different countries of origin have sought services at the Montgomery County FJC with the goal of ending domestic violence in their lives. FJCs are recognized nationally by the law enforcement, medical and mental health communities as a “best-practice” for responding to domestic violence and providing services to victims and their families. Domestic violence victims who come to the FJC are able to receive a broad array of critical Montgomery County services, which are provided in a safe, welcoming environment that also offers on-site child care to support clients while they access FJC services; and help with basic needs such as shelter, food, housing, and transportation, all of which are often lost to victims forced to flee their homes.

EXPANSIONS IN CLIENT SERVICES

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Montgomery County FJC on-site partners included the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office, Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, House of Ruth - Maryland, Catholic Charities, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA) and Career Catchers. These partners provide a vast array of services to FJC clients and their families, including comprehensive safety planning, service of protective orders, welfare checks, criminal investigation and prosecution of offenders, therapy for both adults and children, legal representation at protective order hearings, immigration legal services, and career counseling. Off-site partners include the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Chesapeake Counseling Associates, the Muslim Community Center, Montgomery College, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation and Women Who Care Ministries. Nearly all on-site FJC partners have staff that are bi-lingual in English and Spanish, and also have access to a language line to provide services in the language most comfortable for the victim. This year, the FJC officially welcomed two new partners: the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP) and Court Watch Montgomery. These new



non-profit partners are joining the FJC through generous community grants received by the County Executive and County Council for the 2016 fiscal year. The Asian/Pacific Islander DVRP provides resources and services to Asian/Pacific Islander victims of domestic violence, and Court Watch Montgomery monitors protective order hearings, makes policy recommendations to the County based on those observations, and raises awareness of domestic violence issues and the services available to victims in Montgomery County through community outreach. Currently, both the DVRP and Court Watch are off-site partners, but plans are in place to bring the DVRP on-site in the near future.

This year, the Montgomery County FJC Foundation worked with the Montgomery College Foundation on the Holy Cross Scholarship Program, allowing FJC clients to take certain courses, both credit and non-credit, at Montgomery College at no cost. Staff from the FJC, Career Catchers and Montgomery College all worked together to recommend clients to this program and guide them through the process. Clients who took for-credit courses in the 2014-2015 academic year have been offered funds to continue their studies in the 2015-2016 academic year. The Montgomery College Foundation hopes to be able to offer this scholarship program to new applicants again starting in the Spring of 2016.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends ongoing collaboration among FJC agency partners and the FJC Foundation to continue identifying gaps in domestic violence victim services, and then exploring appropriate, sustainable solutions to fill those gaps.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SUPERVISED VISITATION CENTER

DEVELOP A PROPOSAL FOR A SUPERVISED VISITATION CENTER IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

In 2014, County Executive Isiah Leggett established a work group to address the issue of supervised visitation in Montgomery County. This collaborative group included members representing the Montgomery County Circuit Court, the District Court of Maryland for Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, and other county agencies. The Victim Services Committee, as part of this work group, participated in numerous discussions regarding the feasibility of establishing a Supervised Visitation Center in Montgomery County, and what such a center would look like. The work group drafted a proposal in late-2014 for a Montgomery County Supervised Visitation Center. Upon further review, it was ultimately decided that the cost of the proposed center, which was substantially higher than initially anticipated, prevented the work group from moving forward with the proposal at that time.

Since then, the DVCC has decided to take on the supervised visitation and monitored exchange issue again, with a focus on paring down the former proposal into something more financially feasible. Work on this new proposal is still in the early stages, but all DVCC members agree that these services are paramount to ensuring the safety of families involved in domestic violence cases and that the time for action is now.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends the development of a new, financially feasible proposal to bring supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to Montgomery County.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DEBBIE FEINSTEIN

The Education and Outreach Committee continued to focus on its teen dating violence prevention initiative during the past year. This initiative, titled Choose Respect Montgomery, includes three primary activities: the annual conference for teens, their parents, and youth service providers; the public service announcement video contest; and the healthy teen dating curriculum which is presented in the County's middle and high schools. The Committee also expanded two existing initiatives: the multi-lingual public outreach program to promote awareness of the services available at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center, and the Coaching Boys Into Men program, which utilizes the unique role of coaches in the lives of young male athletes to teach them to be respectful both on and off the field. Finally, the Committee took on two new initiatives this year: collaborating with the Montgomery County Commission for Women to coordinate multiple domestic violence community forums and various locations in the county; and collaborating with Chesapeake Counseling Associates and the Montgomery County FJC Foundation to put on a domestic violence training geared toward youth service providers. Highlights from each of these activities, as well as recommendations for the future, are listed below.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE

HEALTHY TEEN DATING CONFERENCE

The 6th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Conference was held on Sunday, March 8, 2015 at the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College. Funded by Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County FJC Foundation, and sponsored by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), Montgomery College and numerous other Montgomery County agencies and organizations, the purpose of this annual conference is to promote respect in dating relationships and to raise community awareness about the prevalence of teen dating violence. This year's theme was #RespectYourSelfie2015, and focused on abuse through technology and social media, and promoting a healthy self-image.

Despite unforeseen inclement weather issues and school closings, 150 teens, parents, educators, youth service providers, volunteers and public officials attended the half day conference. As soon as attendees arrived, they walked the Red Carpet and took selfies with our conference emcees (Toby Knapp, Hot 99.5 and Jackie Bensen, NBC4) and public officials. Attendees were encouraged to post their selfies on their social media accounts using #RespectYourSelfie2015. Through a new partnership with Zoomph this year, a live social media feed with rotating tiles was running in the main auditorium, showcasing all posts and pictures that used the conference hashtag. Through this technology, attendees were also able to live-tweet answers to questions posed by the emcees.



The remainder of the opening program consisted of two survivor testimonials - one from a teen survivor of dating abuse, and one from the mother of a survivor, who was also domestic violence survivor herself. Attendees were then broken down by grade level into workshops, which were developed by the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), and functioned as a “choose your own path” activity. In groups of 3-4, participants were assigned one of many characters who were in a situation involving dating abuse, making various decisions that influenced the narrative and following the story through to one of several endings. These stories were then used as a jumping-off point for a group discussion about these issues. Following the workshops, attendees reconvened in the auditorium, at which time the winners of the Public Service Announcement Video Contest were then announced, and the conference was brought to a close with the distribution of raffle prizes and free pizza for all attendees.

The conference evaluations were very positive, with more than 97% of the attendees reporting that the event either met or exceeded their expectations. Particularly, attendees enjoyed the selfie red carpet and the survivor testimonials. The conference evaluations were assessed by conference planners and will be taken into consideration when planning future events.

The DVCC is very appreciative of the event sponsorship from Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. Special thanks also go to Montgomery College, JCADA, Zoomph and the numerous other county and community partners that made the 6th Annual Choose Respect Conference a huge success, despite the less-than-expected turnout due to inclement weather. Plans for the 7th annual conference scheduled for Sunday, March 20, 2016 at Richard Montgomery High School are already underway.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO CONTEST

For the sixth consecutive year, the DVCC coordinated the Public Service Announcement Video Contest for local teens in middle and high school. This contest is intended to evoke teens’ awareness and perspective on the issue of teen dating violence, while also allowing them to be creative. Participants were challenged to submit a 60-second video promoting attention to dating abuse. They were also asked to include resource information such as the phone number to a local or national helpline. A total of 36 videos were submitted this year. The Top 3 videos received cash prizes, and two “Honorable Mention” videos received gift cards to Best Buy. This year’s contest was sponsored by Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. Finalists were announced in February, 2015 via the Choose Respect Montgomery Facebook page, and the winners were announced at the 6th Annual Choose Respect Healthy Teen Dating Conference.

The DVCC and its partners believe this contest provides a worthwhile opportunity for teens, and launched the 2016 contest at the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Back-to-School Fair on August 29, 2015. Entries will be accepted in English and Spanish, and cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. The sponsoring school, youth group, teacher or adult leader will also receive recognition.



HEALTHY TEEN DATING CURRICULUM

The Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum is available in both English and Spanish. It is an instructional presentation based on nationally recognized dating abuse prevention curricula to include: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Choose Respect, Liz Claiborne, Love is Not Abuse and Break the Cycle. The 45 minute Prezi presentation provides multiple opportunities for student involvement, and features brief videos on various dating abuse topics such as verbal abuse, abuse through technology and how to intervene as a responsible witness. The conversations with teens during the presentation specifically focus on:

- 1) Components of healthy dating behaviors such as trust and safe, non-threatening communication;
- 2) Identification of early warning signs of abusive dating behavior to include control, isolation, criticism and manipulation;
- 3) Identification of the roles in abusive dating relationships; and
- 4) Addressing dating violence when it is witnessed in school or among social circles.

Local resources and national teen dating abuse help lines and websites are also discussed. Active participants during the presentation receive a silicone Choose Respect Montgomery wristband containing the Choose Respect hashtag #RespectYourSelfie2015.

The Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum is offered at no cost and was approved for middle and high school students by the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Administration and the MCPS Citizen Advisory Board on Family Life and Human Development. Presentation requests are received at the Sheriff's Office from various school personnel, such as health teachers, counselors and school principals. The school principal ultimately approves the presentation for the particular student audience. Family Violence Division Prosecutors and Community Prosecutors from the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office conduct the presentations.

In its fifth year since implementation, the Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum was presented to 2,400 youth participants from MCPS and community groups, representing an increase of 500 over last year.

RECOMMENDATION: The Choose Respect Montgomery initiative has been a successful prevention and outreach project over the past six years. It is the recommendation of the Education and Outreach Committee to continue collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through the Choose Respect Montgomery initiative.



ENGAGING YOUNG MEN IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

Historically, intimate partner violence prevention has been viewed solely as a women's issue. Anti-violence organizations and programs were established as safe spaces where women exposed to intimate partner and sexual violence could find support and healing. In recent years, however, attention has been drawn to the importance of engaging men and boys in violence prevention as well. Many promising programs that involve young men are being introduced across the United States, including Futures Without Violence's program Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM). CBIM is a free tool-kit that utilizes the unique and important role that coaches play in the lives of young men. These comprehensive tools assist coaches in planning important discussions with athletes about respect for women and girls, and that violence doesn't equal strength. Through CBIM, male athletes learn skills to avoid violence and abuse in their relationships.

Springbrook High School hosted the first CBIM pilot program in Montgomery County, led by varsity football coach Adam Bahr during the 2013-2014 academic year. Due to the success of the pilot program, Springbrook High School fully implemented CBIM as part of the standard football season moving forward. The CBIM program was expanded to Montgomery Blair High School for the 2014-2015 academic year, led by Patrick Dudley, the football team's tight end and character coach. The 2015-2016 academic year will see yet another expansion, as Richard Montgomery High School is adopting the program, led by Head Coach Josh Klotz and DVCC Student Member Julian Avenilla, a Richard Montgomery High School senior, who is also one of the football team captains. The Montgomery County FJC Foundation will support these three schools by funding their year-end banquets, providing free bus transportation to the Choose Respect Conference, and connecting athletes who wish to attend Montgomery College after high school with some potential scholarship opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends engaging young men in domestic violence prevention through continued expansion of the CBIM program.

PROMOTING AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM SERVICES

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER FIVE-LANGUAGE INFORMATION CARDS

Victims of domestic violence often do not know what services are available to them, or where to go to seek help. In an effort to promote awareness of these resources, the Education and Outreach Committee developed Family Justice Center (FJC) information cards. These cards contain the location of the FJC, contact information, a list of available services, and other important information. The content is presented in five different languages – English, Spanish, French, Chinese and Korean – and is pre-folded to fit discreetly in a pocket or purse. Clear, wall-affixed receptacles were procured for the distribution of these cards. Receptacles and cards are on display in all Montgomery County Regional Services Centers, all Montgomery County public libraries, both District Court locations in Montgomery County – Rockville and Silver Spring – in the courtrooms where protective order cases



are normally heard, and in all of the women's restrooms in the Judicial Center/Circuit Court building. Replenishment protocols are in place for all locations in which the cards are on display, and the initiative continues to be a success.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued promotion of the Family Justice Center and its services through expansion of the FJC Five-Language Information Card initiative.

EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ITS IMPACT ON FAMILIES, AND RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS

“IDENTIFY, SUPPORT, AND ENCOURAGE: CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”

As children and adolescents grow and mature in their communities, they can face innumerable challenges, including issues related domestic violence in their families or in their own dating relationships. Individuals who work with children and teens on a daily basis can encounter a wide variety of these topics every single day, and it is essential that they are equipped with the knowledge to help each youth deal with each challenge appropriately. To address this, the Education and Outreach Committee coordinated with the Montgomery County FJC Foundation to put on the “Identify, Support, and Encourage: Children Exposed to Domestic Violence” training, developed by Dr. Mindy Thiel of Chesapeake Counseling Associates. The training was held on May 12, 2015 at the Universities at Shady Grove, and was made possible through a generous grant from Verizon Hopeline. The training focused on answering key questions that adults working with children exposed to domestic violence may have. There were 92 people in attendance representing more than 40 schools and organizations from Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Frederick County and Washington, DC. The higher-than-expected turnout, and the overwhelmingly positive reviews made the Identify, Support and Encourage training a huge success.

“A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”

In response to the domestic violence-related homicide that occurred in a Target parking lot in Germantown, MD, the DVCC Education and Outreach Committee collaborated with other Montgomery County agencies and organizations on an effort led by the Montgomery County Commission for Women to hold a public forum on domestic violence. The forum was held on the evening of July 21, 2015 at the Upcounty Regional Services Center in Germantown. Approximately 20 people attended the forum, which included an overview of domestic violence, a survivor story, the law enforcement perspective, and information on all of the resources available in the county for victims and their families. The event was well-received and will likely be replicated elsewhere in the county.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued participation in events to educate the community about domestic violence, its impacts, and the resources that are available for victims and their families.



LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DOROTHY FAIT, ESQ.

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee focused this year on supporting certain domestic violence-related legislation in the state of Maryland. Below is a summary of supported legislation as well as the committee's recommendation for the coming year.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION UPDATES

Numerous domestic violence-related bills were passed during this year's legislative session, all of which will take effect on October 1, 2015. Pieces of legislation that were of particular interest to the DVCC Legislative and Policy Planning Committee include:

HB 225/SB 269 - Domestic Violence - Additional Relief

This bill expands the relief available in a final protective order by authorizing a judge to order "any other relief that a judge determines is necessary to protect a person eligible for relief from abuse."

HB 224/SB 315 - Domestic Violence - 2-year Protective Order

Clarifies that extensions of protective orders applies to consent orders.

HB 606/SB 477 - Domestic Violence - Persons Eligible for Relief

This bill expands the "persons eligible for relief" in the protective order statute to include "an individual who has had a sexual relationship with the respondent within 1 year before filing of the petition."

HB 263 - Domestic Violence - Permanent Prot. Orders - Conspiracy or Solicitation to Commit Murder

This bill expands the circumstances under which a court is required to issue a permanent final protective order to include the conviction of an individual for conspiracy or solicitation to commit murder.

SB 270/HB 390 - Protective Order and Peace Order Petitions - Maryland Residents

This bill authorizes the filing of a protective or peace order petition if the abuse is alleged to have occurred in the State or if the person eligible for relief is a resident of the State, regardless of whether the alleged abuse occurred in the state.

RECOMMENDATION: The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC.



OFFENDER PROGRAM AND POLICY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: ANGELA TALLEY

The Offender Program and Policy Committee includes members from Montgomery County and Maryland State agencies that focus on domestic violence offender intervention. Committee members remain focused on evaluating offender programs within their individual departments and identifying collaborative opportunities to improve communication and offender services as a whole. The details of the committee's departmental and system review as well as recommendations for improvement are outlined below.

IMPROVING THE CURRENT GPS MONITORING PROGRAM UTILIZED BY THE PRE-TRIAL SUPERVISION UNIT

EXPAND GPS MONITORING TO 24-HOUR COVERAGE

In 2014, the Offender Program and Policy Committee was asked by Judge Karla Smith, DVCC Chair, to examine the current GPS monitoring program utilized by the Montgomery County Pre-Trial Supervision Unit (PTSU) for potential improvements. The Committee identified that the current system could be improved by expanding to 24-hour coverage, as exclusion zone violations and other GPS alerts are only received and vetted by PTSU staff during business hours due to personnel and budget limitations. The Committee developed a 60-day pilot program in which exclusion zone violations that occurred during non-business hours were forwarded to on-call investigators in the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), Special Victims Investigations Division (SVID). Violations were vetted by the on-call SVID Investigator, who advised the Emergency Communication Center (ECC). ECC then dispatched the appropriate patrol officers to the location. Upon arrival, the responding patrol officers had to confirm that the suspect was at the location and in violation of a protective/peace order by contacting the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). The responding patrol officer would then arrest the suspect if all information was confirmed. In the event the suspect was no longer on scene, the responding patrol officer would note the suspect's absence, and check the welfare of the victim. The Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office (SAO), PTSU, and MCPD worked together to follow up promptly on all violations. To facilitate this pilot program, PTSU held a training for MCPD staff on how to receive, identify and vet alerts that they receive from B.I., Inc., the current vendor providing GPS services to PTSU.

When the pilot program completed in October 2014, the Committee evaluated the program, noting that the program ran very smoothly, but that there were very few after hours incidents that required a response. The Committee decided to fully implement the new protocol.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends continued evaluation of the new 24-hour GPS program, completing any necessary paperwork and making any necessary adjustments as the program continues in the long term.



**PROMOTING INCREASED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COUNTY
AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
ISSUES**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM

The Offender Program and Policy Committee identified the need for increased understanding and communication between the numerous Montgomery County agencies and organizations that work with offenders as part of the coordinated community response to domestic violence. To facilitate this, the Committee is coordinating a Montgomery County domestic violence forum. The overall mission is to promote increased synergy between the criminal justice and treatment systems in the county. The objectives will be to (1) promote increased understanding and networking between the various groups that routinely work on domestic violence cases; (2) promote increased awareness of the services and treatments available for individuals involved in domestic violence situations; (3) identify areas in which the county agencies and community organizations can work together to address procedural difficulties and streamline services to families dealing with domestic violence; and (4) ensure that domestic violence cases are seamlessly tracked from inception to completion to ensure defendant compliance.

The first such forum will be hosted by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Abused Persons Program (APP), and will take place in October or November of 2015. Afterward, the Committee will evaluate the forum and (1) formulate ways to address any outstanding concerns or issues identified during the forum; (2) decide whether this forum would be useful to coordinate at regular intervals, and if so, how often; and (3) evaluate the format of the forum and recommend any adjustments if it were to be held again in the future.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends continued development and execution of the Montgomery County domestic violence forum to promote increased communication between county agencies and organizations that work with offenders as part of the coordinated community response to domestic violence. The Committee also recommends exploring the possibility of holding this forum at regular intervals.



SUMMARY

Through the services provided by the FJC, the monitoring of domestic violence policy, and the implementation of numerous domestic violence prevention initiatives, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) continues to play an active and critical role in creating a safe community for families to live free of abuse. These activities and programs would not be possible without the support of DVCC agency partners, community groups and the Montgomery County FJC Foundation. In the coming year, the DVCC will continue to promote and expand existing initiatives and services as well as explore new, innovative strategies to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Montgomery County.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

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